

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a computer network having a server computer and a client computer connectable through the network to the server computer, wherein an operating environment is available to the client computer, a method for integrating a set of data into the operating environment, wherein the set of data is from at least one source that is external to the operating environment, the method comprising:

providing a connection between the network and the at least one source through which the set of data is retrieved through a host operating environment;

adapting the set of data for use through the host operating environment; and the client computer using the adapted data through the host operating environment, wherein the adapting and the using do not require nonvolatile storage of the set of data as native data to the host operating environment.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein using the adapted data through the host operating environment comprises using the adapted data as a first class participant within the host operating environment.

3. The method of claim 2, comprising, if the set of data is changed through the use of the adapted data:

appropriately updating the set of data in the at least one source; and appropriately updating a set of wrapping data associated with the set of data, if any updating of the wrapping data is appropriate.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of data is transiently stored as data that is native to the operating environment, during the use thereof.

5. The method of claim 1, comprising use of the set of data by more than one client computer.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one source comprises a relational database system.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one source comprises an Open DataBase Compliant (ODBC) data source.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein adapting the set of data comprises:
determining wrapping data associated with the external data, the wrapping data being for specifying characteristics of the set of data as native data to the host operating environment; and
storing the wrapping data externally to the host operating environment.

9. The method of claim 8, comprising:
mapping groups of the external data to fields of a native document; and
using the mapping data in determining the wrapping data.

10. The method of claim 1, comprising:

providing parameters for initialization and configuration of a data virtualization system within the host operating environment;

maintaining connection with the at least one external data source;

5 providing parameters for integration of the data virtualization system with the host operating environment; and

providing parameters for identifying and analyzing the set of data so as to associate with the set of data attributes and properties necessary to allow the set of data to be utilized as a first class participant within the host operating environment and to assure maintenance of operation of the host operating environment unimpeded by the data virtualization system.

11. A computer usable medium storing program code which, when executed on a computerized device, causes the computerized device to execute a method, in a computer network having a server computer and a client computer connectable through the network to the server computer, wherein an operating environment is available to the client computer, the method being for integrating a set of data into the operating environment, wherein the set of data is from at least one source that is external to the operating environment, the method comprising:

providing a connection between the network and the at least one source through which the set of data is retrieved through a host operating environment;

20 adapting the set of data for use through the host operating environment; and

the client computer using the adapted data through the host operating environment, wherein the adapting and the using do not require nonvolatile storage of the set of data as native data to the host operating environment.